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ABSTRACT

Pennsylvania's Clarion University plans to implement an electronic visit for the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education's (NCATE's) 2003 continuing accreditation visit. The College of Education and Human Services is committed to selecting and graduating outstanding candidates who are empowered with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to assume responsibility for the exercise of professional judgment and continued professional growth to meet the needs of diverse students in a changing society. It is developing a conceptual framework which defines the preparation of effective, dedicated, and competent professionals. Learners are the center of the conceptual framework, emphasizing individual variations, cultural diversity, and societal influences. The framework identifies the process of knowledge construction, authentic learning and assessment, and learning interactions and includes learners outcomes (professionalism, decision making, and life long learning). Part of the 2003 NCATE accreditation process includes creating a Web site for electronic distribution of materials. The university is also revising student teaching guidelines. Student teachers will prepare electronic portfolios as evidence of program outcomes. They will be required to post assignments to their personal Web sites for inclusion in the electronic portfolios. The university is planning to develop electronic exhibits related to technology use in data collection. (SM)

# **Sharing Teacher Education Curricula Electronically**

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2001

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## Sharing Teacher Education Curricula Electronically

### Introduction

In spring 1998, a National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) Board of Examiners (BOE) Team visited Clarion University to determine whether or not the teacher education program continued to meet the NCATE Unit Standards. The College of Education and Human Services, in preparation for the visit, compiled forty-nine (three inch, three-ring) binders of evidence to support the unit's continued accreditation. In addition, exhibits including documents, student work, displays, and other printed materials were made visible to endorse the data included in the binders.

As Clarion University continues to meet the NCATE Unit Standards and prepares to meet the NCATE 2000 Unit Standards, changes and revisions in the preparation process are warranted. The University and the Dean of the College of Education and Human Services have made a commitment of time and resources to the implementation of an electronic visit for the Continuing Accreditation Visit in the spring of 2003.

### Background

Using technology to improve the accreditation process is a recommendation made by the NCATE Task Force on Technology and Teacher Education. NCATE currently encourages participants in the accreditation process to use electronic means to communicate and to store and retrieve data. Managing information for perusal by a Board of Examiners (BOE) team is a challenging endeavor for Colleges of Education as they design electronic locations for the needed pieces of information and knowledge that will document the Teachers Education Program's compliance with the NCATE 2000 Unit Standards.

During the 1998-99 academic year, a committee comprised of representatives of the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Education and Human Services at Clarion University began the process of reviewing and revising the unit's Conceptual Framework. Representatives from Chemistry, English, Library Science, Education, Communication Science and Disorders, and Special Education collaborated to redesign the College of Education and Human Services Conceptual Framework to meet the changing learning environments of our technological society.

An important component of **Learners: Constructing Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions** is the design of a graphic representation of the contexts, processes, and outcomes that reflect the mission of the Clarion University College of Education and Human Services. The committee agreed that a series of triangles with learners at the center of the graphic would best represent the essence of the Teacher Education Program. The series of triangles depicts the

contexts, processes, and outcomes of the Conceptual Framework and the current knowledge base in the field of education. The College continues to refine and enhance the graphic design as documents and evidence are prepared to support and explain its purpose.

## **Unit Mission**

The mission of the Clarion University College of Education and Human Services is to prepare effective, dedicated, and high quality professionals, decision makers, and life-long learners who have mastered a recognized body of knowledge, internalized standards of excellence, and demonstrated the required candidate performances. At the center of the mission are learners, P-12 students, candidates, and education and human service professionals, who are active participants in the process of building knowledge, skill, and dispositions.

Based on a strong commitment to learning and teaching, the Conceptual Framework of the College of Education and Human Services defines the preparation of effective, dedicated, and high quality professionals as Learners: Constructing Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions. The framework reflects state and national education standards and describes principles of learning and teaching for administrators, teaching and human services professionals, candidates, learners, school district and agency partners, families, policy makers, and others who make decisions about excellence in Education. The framework offers a foundation for articulating and discussing current learning theories and research on effective educational practices and for assessing professional candidate performance.

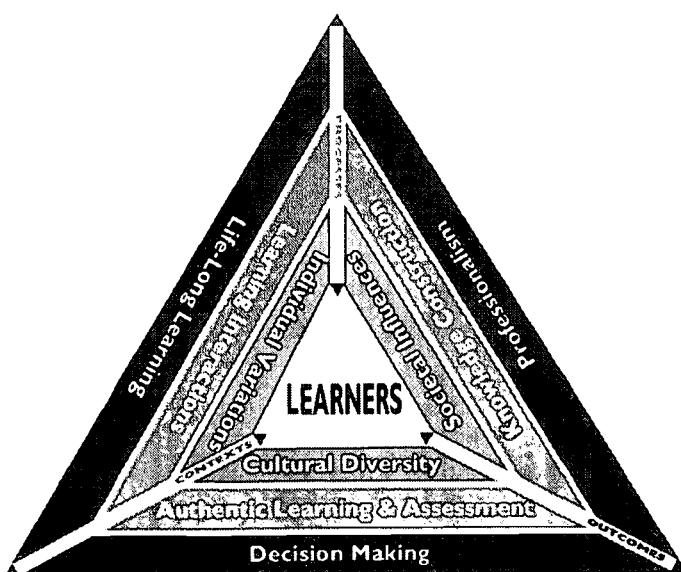
The College of Education and Human Services is committed to selecting and graduating outstanding candidates who are empowered with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to assume responsibility for the exercise of professional judgment and continued professional growth to meet the needs of a diverse population in a rapidly changing society. The programs and environments offered by the College are dedicated to facilitating the development of professional candidates who apply knowledge, skills, and dispositions to:

- emphasize the importance of individual variations of unique physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and technological abilities and skills;
- embrace cultural diversity;
- respond to societal needs and influences affecting learners and their families;
- promote learning and teaching strategies that facilitate the development of meaningful knowledge, skills, and dispositions;
- provide authentic learning and assessment experiences with appropriate technology applications;
- support learning interactions fostering collaboration and cooperation among learners, families, and other members of learning communities;

- maintain high standards of professionalism;
- make effective educational decisions; and
- continue to learn and grow personally and professionally.

## The Conceptual Framework

### Learners: Constructing Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions



**Learners** are at the center of the Conceptual Framework. The centrality of **Learners**, depicted by the graphic above, reflects current cognitive views of how individuals learn. The framework identifies both students and professionals as **Learners** who are active participants in the process of building knowledge, skills, and dispositions within the context of what they already know and applying the new understandings and skills to authentic situations. **Learners** are surrounded by three triangles depicting the development of students and professionals as they acquire knowledge, skills, and dispositions within the:

- ◆ **Contexts** of individual variations, cultural diversity, and societal influences and the
- ◆ **Processes** of knowledge construction, learning interactions, and authentic learning and assessment to facilitate the
- ◆ **Outcomes** of professionalism, decision making, and life-long learning.

The first triangle of the model is **Contexts**. Learners develop in the contexts of **Individual Variations, Cultural Diversity, and Societal Influences**. The learners are inseparable from these important contexts. **Contexts** impact the ways in which individuals process and construct knowledge and experiences.

**Individual Variations** provide complex contexts for the development of learners. As individuals develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions, they are dependent on the unique set of physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and technological abilities and skills they each possess.

**Cultural Diversity** is an important context in the development of learners. Educational programs include communities of learners encompassing students, families, and professionals from diverse backgrounds. Respect for and responsiveness to the learners and their cultural and language diversity is a crucial component of this context.

**Societal Influences** include the economic, social, technological, cultural, and political contexts that affect schools and agencies. These contexts impact learners as they construct knowledge, skills, and dispositions and apply these new understandings and skills to real-life situations.

The second triangle of the Conceptual Framework identifies the **Processes of Knowledge Construction, Authentic Learning and Assessment, and Learning Interactions**. Learners use these processes to promote cognitive, language, creative, social, emotional, physical, and motor growth and development.

**Knowledge Construction** is a process learners use to build meaningful understandings that support growth and development. Grounded in cognitive learning theory, inductive and deductive instructional models assume the active involvement of learners in the process of acquiring and constructing knowledge. Professionals use a variety of models of learning and teaching that are designed to help students develop deep understandings. Knowledge is not static but will continually evolve and change as learners confront new information, experiences, and technology.

**Authentic Learning and Assessment** are processes requiring understandings similar to the thinking encountered in actual situations outside the classroom. Effective instruction, technology, and authentic assessment assist learners in the application and investigation of real world problems and solutions. Learning experiences and assessments are anchored in the learners' real world experiences contributing to the knowledge construction in a particular content discipline.

**Learning Interactions** is a process occurring as learners communicate, collaborate, and negotiate in the construction of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Learning interactions are enhanced through the integration of technology. Interactions encourage learners to verbalize their thinking, refine their understandings, and reflect on growth and changes.

The third triangle reflects the learners' **Outcomes**. All university Education and Human Services programs for candidates at the initial and advanced levels guide and facilitate learners as they develop:

- **Professionalism** - personal codes of behaviors and responsibilities as members of learning communities;
- **Decision making** - essential skills in the active construction of knowledge, skills, and dispositions; and
- **Life-Long Learning** - habits of inquiry and reflection that help nourish continuing curiosity and excitement about the world.

### **Creating a Clarion University NCATE Web Site**

An important part of the upcoming Clarion University NCATE accreditation process was, and continues to be the creation of a web site for electronic distribution of materials <<http://www.stevens.clarion.edu/ncate>>. The initial development of this web site consisted of two main components. The first was the important process of procuring hardware and software. The second was the initial design and development of the web site. The combination of these two components has contributed to a relatively smooth creation and implementation of the web site.

The first component of creating the Clarion University NCATE web site was to purchase hardware and software. Early during the Fall 2000 semester, it was determined that a file and web sharing computer server should be purchased. A Macintosh computer was purchased since the majority of the members of the NCATE Coordinating Committee were more comfortable with this type of computer. This 500 MHz Macintosh G4 server with 256 MB of RAM and a 72 GB hard drive provides web and file storage for the web site. Appleshare IP 6.3 was installed on the server for file and web sharing and the Clarion University Computing Services Department provided the <<http://www.stevens.clarion.edu/ncate>> domain name.

Another piece of hardware essential to the ongoing development of the Clarion University NCATE web site is the UMAX flatbed scanner. This scanner, with Omnipage software, will provide the ability to scan older documents in which only a hard copy can be located. The software converts the scanned page into a Microsoft Word document, which can then be saved as a web page. This web page file will then be published as part of the web site.

Probably the most important purchase was the web and graphic development software. The NCATE Coordinating Committee chose to purchase Macromedia Dreamweaver for web page design and Macromedia Fireworks for graphic design. These two software programs work together seamlessly and help amateur web designers to create sophisticated graphics, web pages, and navigation tools. Dreamweaver and Fireworks will continue to be upgraded as necessary and have been the main software tools used in developing the Clarion University NCATE web site.

The second component of creating the Clarion University NCATE web site was the actual design and development. This process also began early during the Fall 2000 semester. To aid in designing the Clarion University NCATE web site, it was important to review some web sites already created by other universities for the accreditation process. Louisiana State University and St. Cloud State University each have NCATE accreditation web sites. Although these sites were not reviewed for the purpose of visual design, they were very helpful in planning the necessary content for the Clarion University NCATE web site. The Louisiana State University NCATE site is located at <<http://asterix.ednet.lsu.edu/~ncate/iindex.html>>. The St. Cloud State University web site address is <<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/~coe/accreditation/ncate/index.html>>.

The actual layout of the Clarion University NCATE web site needed to adhere to the university's web site style guide. This meant that the majority of the web site planning needed to focus on content, not design. However, in order to accommodate the wide range of links for accreditation materials, additional navigation tools needed to be developed. For example, the web page that describes the Clarion University Conceptual Framework, <<http://www.stevens.clarion.edu/ncate/framework.htm>>, needed to have several links to web pages that explained the framework in more detail. These additional navigation tools were acceptable by the Clarion University web page style guide and will be an important feature of the growing NCATE accreditation site.

As the design of the Clarion University NCATE web site has progressed, it has been necessary to publish some materials while planning for others. The majority of the currently published materials are related to the Conceptual Framework. More information is being added to the web site as it becomes available and the process may continue for many months in preparation for the NCATE visit. Additional plans for the web site include the hiring of a student worker, the development of a Filemaker Pro database, and the creation of faculty member web pages. There will undoubtedly be many unforeseen components which make up the final version of the Clarion University NCATE web site in 2003.

### **Revision of Student Teaching Guidelines**

A second major review and revision project was underway during the same timeframe as the conceptual framework project. A committee of university supervisors began the yearlong task of revising the *Student Teaching Guidelines*. In addition to language changes throughout the document, three major areas of revision were undertaken. They included: the classroom observation form, the Student Teaching Performance Profile (STPP), and the rubric for performance assessment.

The initiation of the two projects described above began the process of preparing for the Continuing Accreditation Visit scheduled for Clarion University in 2003. As representatives of the College of Education and Human Services attended NCATE sessions at professional meetings including the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) Conference, the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) Conference, and professional workshops (Teacher Candidate Assessment and Changing Perspectives); they began to develop an understanding for the need to prepare the evidence for the 2003 Continuing Accreditation Visit electronically.

### **Planning for the Collection of Electronic Evidence**

In January 2000 the College submitted its Continuing Accreditation Report (CAR) electronically for the first time. This first step of providing evidence for the Continuing Accreditation on-line sets the tone for preparing documents and exhibits electronically. Communication about the preparation of data and displays will be accomplished via electronic mail (email) as faculty and administration send messages colleague to colleague, through listserves, and hold discussions in chat rooms related to accreditation issues.

Planning ways of displaying evidence of student work and accomplishments is an important component of the preparation process. Outcomes for candidates in the Teacher Education Program include: professionalism - personal codes of behaviors and responsibilities as members of learning communities; decision making - essential skills in the active construction of knowledge, skills, and dispositions; and life-long learning - habits of inquiry and reflection that help nourish continuing curiosity and excitement about the world.

Candidates in teacher education will prepare an electronic portfolio as evidence documenting the outcomes of the program. Each education course in the Teacher Education Program will support the portfolio by requiring the completion of a performance task related to the content of the course. The completion of the performance task will be documented by its inclusion in the candidate's electronic portfolio. The framework for the electronic portfolio will be a web site designed and created by individual teacher education candidates. Constructing the web site is a work in progress. The web address is: <http://www.stevens.clarion.edu/ncate>

### **Electronic Portfolio**

The process of designing the electronic portfolio will begin with freshman level courses and continue through the student teaching experiences. Below is a tentative plan for documenting performance and achievement of teacher education candidates through tasks assigned during the required courses of the Teacher Education Program. (All performance tasks will be posted to the student's web site.)

COURSE TITLE	PERFORMANCE TASK
ED 110: Introduction to Education	Write an essay describing your philosophy of education.
ED 121: Human Development and Learning	Create a developmentally appropriate task for children.
ED 122: Educational Psychology	Observe a secondary classroom and write a report about your observation and experiences.
ED 217: Microcomputer Applications in the Classroom	Design and create a web site to support your electronic portfolio.
ED 225: Multicultural Education	Visit a multicultural, multiethnic classroom and analyze its conditions for effective teaching and learning.
ED 327: Instructional Strategies and Management	Videotape yourself peer teaching and critique your performance.
ED 329: Educational Evaluation and Authentic Assessment	Construct an appropriate assessment tool to match instructional design.
ED, ELED, ECH Methods Courses	Design, implement, and assess instruction for a content area.
ED/ELED/ECH 424/425: Student Teaching	Plan, design, implement, and assess a unit of instruction in a classroom.

This is not a complete list of the required courses for each major, but includes the core requirements for all education majors. The core courses will be a starting place for the design of the electronic portfolio.

#### **E-Exhibits**

The Dean of the College of Education and Human Services has offered three credits of summer school work to a faculty member who will redesign and refurbish the College's web site. The summer work will include the computerized design of the conceptual framework graphic, the lay out for the web page, and the posting of the web page to the university's server. In addition, Two NCATE Coordinators will work collaboratively to advise faculty members about needed materials and evidence for the web site.

Faculty members assigned to teach required education courses will be responsible for designing assessments related to the goals and outcomes of the Teacher Education Program and will require students to post the assignments to their personal web sites for inclusion in the electronic portfolio.

Ideas for other e-exhibits relate to using technology in data collection. The Dean will work collaboratively with the Office of the Associate Provost for Administration to design appropriate data collection systems that can be linked to the College's web site and accessed easily by the BOE team and others.

### **Summary**

Preparation for an electronic NCATE visit is a work in progress at Clarion University. Over the next two years, as preparations continue for the NCATE Continuing Accreditation Visit in 2003, there will undoubtedly be changes, revisions, and refinements to the web site and the electronic documents. Through the collaborative efforts of faculty, administrators, P - 12 partners, and teacher candidates, Clarion University's electronic visit will be accomplished.

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